



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.2413 | FAX (517) 373.5144
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/allen/

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Contact: Jamie Callahan
866-525-5637

Senate Republicans unveil package supporting state parks

LANSING – Michigan’s state parks would receive more funding under legislation being introduced today in the Senate, Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City, announced.

The bill, which would implement an income tax return check-off of \$2 for donations to the state park system, is part of the Senate Republican’s State Parks Initiative.

“Whether you are visiting the parks in Tahquamenon Falls, Aloha or Traverse City, there are few places as splendid as Michigan’s State Parks for they are truly one of our greatest treasures,” Allen said. “Michiganders across the state are passionate about their state parks and we need to continue to be dedicated stewards of our parks by contributing to their preservation and encouraging community support.”

Other bills in the package, sponsored by Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, would create an awards program recognizing a state park of the year, state park volunteer of the year and state park worker of the year. The package also would create a State Parks Advisory Committee, under a bill sponsored by Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township.

The State Parks Advisory Committee would be in charge of helping guide the park system. They also would be in charge of selecting the award recipients each year. The committee will be appointed by the director of Department of Natural Resources with the advice and consent of the Natural Resources Commission.

“State parks not only preserve nature and allow Michigan residents the opportunity to enjoy the state’s environmental wonders, but also serve as a great tourism magnet to attract visitors to northern Michigan and bolster our economy,” said Allen. “This legislation will provide another opportunity for Michigan residents to support our state park system.”

The bills now go to the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee for consideration.

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Comments from Sen. Allen on the state parks package are available for download on the Senate Majority Audiowire at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop.